UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/CP/LES/NOTE/5
24 March 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-ninth session
4-29 May 1992, Geneva
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

PROGRAMME PLANNING: COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

FIFTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR LESOTHO

Note by the Administrator

I. PREPARATORY PROCESS

1. The fifth country programme for Lesotho is the result of a joint undertaking by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government, led by its Ministry of Planning, Economic and Manpower Development, the coordinating authority for external cooperation. A series of preparatory activities preceded the formulation of the country programme. These included, inter alia, a mid-term review of the fourth country programme in 1989 by the Government, United Nations system agencies and donors, a joint government/UNDP assessment of the fourth country programme in November 1990, sectoral reviews and elaboration of programme areas (using for the most part national consultants) and joint UNDP/government working groups. In addition, consultations were conducted with major United Nations system agencies and donors and programming missions were fielded in the areas of human resources development, employment, management, industry, agriculture and rural development. The preparation of the country programme coincided and was coordinated with the formulation of programmes of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) covering the same period, 1992-1997.

2. The mid-term review and assessment of the fourth country programme confirmed its relevance and contribution to the Fourth National Development Plan priorities and strategies, focusing on strengthening planning capacity, human resources and rural development. Nearly 36 per cent of the indicative planning figure (IPF) resources were used for national capacity-building through training; a further 25 per cent for enhancing planning capacity; and 35 per cent for agriculture and income-generating activities in the rural sector. The lessons drawn from the implementation of the fourth country

programme underline the importance of using a programme approach to avoid fragmentation of interventions, enhance national management of technical cooperation programmes and maximize impact and sustainability. Key criteria for the success of technical cooperation, which will be followed during the implementation of the fifth country programme, include: participation of beneficiaries in programme formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; increased use of national experts in programme implementation; and using the needs assessment as a basis for training for capacity-building.

3. Based on these consultations, the role of UNDP in technical cooperation will be determined taking into consideration the national technical cooperation assistance programmes (NaTCAP) process, round-table conferences, General Assembly resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989 and Governing Council decision 90/34 of 23 June 1990. Priorities for cooperation with the Government were identified and reflected in the advisory note, which was shared with donors and United Nations system agencies and approved by the Action Committee in September 1991. The areas of concentration of the fifth country programme are based on the priorities outlined in the Fifth Five-Year Development Plan (1991-1996) and the Extended Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF).

II. ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

4. Lesotho has a unique status as a least developed country (LDC) totally surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. The country's socio-economic performance is strongly dependent on the latter's economy in both the import and export sectors. The main source of income is derived from migrant worker remittances, which represent about one half of gross national product (GNP) and from customs union revenue. This situation requires a focused, interlinked technical cooperation programme which will improve management of the meagre economic resources in order to lessen dependence on the Republic of South Africa and to expand local employment opportunities. Nearly half of rural households are headed by women.

5. Despite its lack of natural resources (apart from water), scarcity of skilled manpower in various fields, extensive soil erosion and an antiquated land tenure system, Lesotho has made considerable advances since independence in 1966 in respect to human development. Significant progress has been made within the principal indicators - life expentancy, access to safe water and health facilities, and adult literacy - that now reach levels above the sub-Saharan average. However, these gains are likely to erode given the declining income from migrant worker remittances and donor assistance unless economic performance and management are improved.

6. The fifth country programme is based on a key national objective of the Fifth National Development Plan (1991-1996): the elimination of poverty by providing employment opportunities and income-generating projects and by continuous education and vocational training. Through four interlinked areas of concentration - economic and social planning and financial management; human resources development; employment promotion; and rural development -

UNDP cooperation with the Government will contribute to the effective implementation of the ESAF (1991-1994), the National Environment Plan, the National Education Investment Plan, the Rural Development Strategy and the Industrial and Employment Policies, which are geared to create opportunities for employment and enhance human development. The country programme implementation is complemented by inputs from the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Management Development Programme (MDP) and other donors and is expected to result in: strengthened planning, aid coordination and resource management systems; a more skilled manpower base; improved quality and relevance of education, with the population having greater access to both education and training; reduced unemployment; and increased income from rural development projects in which miners, women, the unskilled and youth are the main participants.

7. IFP resources ($19.6 million) are concentrated in economic and social planning (19.3 per cent), human resources (21.3 per cent), employment development (19.3 per cent) and rural development (26.1 per cent), with 10 per cent earmarked for unprogrammed reserves and 4 per cent for other activities.

III. MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

8. The effective implementation of the fifth country programme requires the Government to assume the major role in formulation of the specific programmes of intervention and coordination of internal and external inputs to ensure efficient management of technical cooperation resources and to ensure sustainability. The Government has agreed to assign a national manager to each area of concentration to facilitate the integration of the country programme areas of focus within such national programmes as ESAF, employment policy, the Education Investment Plan, the National Environment Plan and the Rural Development Strategy.

9. To the extent possible, the programme will be nationally executed. Wider use of national experts and consultants will be made, especially in such areas as socio-economic development, employment and education. Under the new support cost arrangements, it is envisaged that agency support for such projects will be provided primarily through TSS-2 resources. Agency involvement in the early stages of programme implementation will be ensured, inter alia, through TSS-1 funds.

10. The number of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) is to expand from 40 to 60 during the fifth country programme. Likewise, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations Short-Term Advisory Services (UNISTAR) will be used in programme implementation. A Government/UNDP Programme Management and Review Committee will be set up to review the progress of the country programme in contributing to the attainment of national priority objectives. Tripartite reviews of projects will be replaced by annual reviews of the overall programme.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

11. The fifth country programme for Lesotho is based on the country's national development strategy and objectives, as outlined in the draft Fifth Five-Year Development Plan, and is in line with the overall programming directives embodied in General Assembly resolution 44/211 and Governing Council decision 90/34. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Lesotho.